Government Accountability Document – October, 2004

Communications Nova Scotia
Annual Accountability Report For The Fiscal Year 2003–2004

105-06029/

Table of Contents

Accountability Statement	3
Message From The Assistant Deputy Minister	4
Introduction	5
Department Progress and Accomplishments	5
Our Goals	
Core Business Functions	
Priorities	6 - 8
Corporate Communications Plan	
Improve internal communication	
Educate government about our services	
Embrace technologies for efficient service delivery	
Financial Results	9
Outcome Measures	10 - 11

Accountability Statement

The accountability report of Communications Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2004, is prepared pursuant to the Provincial Finance Act and government policy and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Communications Nova Scotia business plan information for the fiscal year 2003–04. The reporting of Communications Nova Scotia's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Communications Nova Scotia's management.

We acknowledge that this report is the responsibility of Communications Nova Scotia management. To the extent possible, the report is a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in Communications Nova Scotia business plans for 2003/4.

The Honourable Ernest L. Fage, Minister

Howard Windsor, Deputy Minister

Message From The Assistant Deputy Minister

In the year past Communications Nova Scotia has met or exceeded all of its performance targets. We have succeeded in consistently providing high quality communications services to our clients across government.

The dedicated and talented staff at CNS work hard to meet the varied and challenging communications needs of the provincial government. We continuously strive to find better and more efficient ways to meet our clients' needs for communications services and products.

Laura Lee Langley, Assistant Deputy Minister

Introduction

This accountability report is based on the goals, priorities and outcomes set out in the 2003 – 2004 business plan of Communications Nova Scotia.

Our Goals

1. Through quality communications, help Nova Scotians understand the actions of their government.
2. Enhance opportunities for economic growth in related private-sector communications fields.
3. Obtain the highest quality and best-value communications products and services for government.
4. Expand and strengthen internal and external communications.

Core Business Functions

- Communications Planning: strategic communications advise and planning
- Creative Services: service delivery and subcontracting for video, graphic design, audio, photography, editorial and electronic publishing.
- Media Services: service delivery of media monitoring, logistical support, distribution of news releases and communications support, advertising production and placement
- Publication Services: service delivery, provision and subcontracting of government printing and publishing requirements.

The purpose of this report is to provide an account of the progress that has been made in the pursuit of the objectives set forth in the 2003-2004 business plan. We are able to report the achievement of all major priorities and considerable progress toward the rest.

In addition to the plans and priorities set out in our 2002-2003 business plan, the emergency public information component of Communications Nova Scotia provided communications for two major emergencies, Hurricane Juan and the February blizzard, which became known as "White Juan." In both cases, established collaborative protocols were beneficial. In December 2003, 68 employees took part in a workshop which addressed the role of CNS during emergencies. And the Emergency Communicators Network met again in March 2004, specifically to share best practices that should be followed during emergencies.

Priorities

1. Communications Planning:

Build on corporate communications planning efforts
Core Business Function supported: Communications Planning
Communications Nova Scotia supports government's corporate agenda with strategic communications planning. This helps departments and agencies to position government's priorities. CNS monitored and approved annual communication plans developed within each department and agency. These plans provide a positioning statement, within which communications planning for government programs and initiatives can be developed. This coordinated approach increases public understanding of the government's primary goals and objectives.

Broaden the agency's professional development strategy
Core Business Function supported: Communications Planning, Media Services, Creative Services, Publication services.
Professional development sessions were provided by CNS on an agency wide basis on at least three occasions and participation rates were excellent. Seventy-three staff from all divisions of the agency took part in the "Hermann Whole Brain" proactive people skills session in June 2003, and 68 staff learned more about the role of CNS in emergency situations at the Joint Emergency Operations Committee session led by EMO in December 2003. Twenty-three staff participated in the March 2004 "Diversity and Employment Equity" session, which dealt with discrimination and barriers faced by designated groups. Friday morning coffee sessions proved to be cost-effective peer-to-peer opportunity for CNS staff to learn from one another's experience. In addition, three individuals took part Leadership /Mentorship programs, and two staff members earned certificates in Executive Coaching from Royal Roads University in Victoria, B.C. Throughout the year, there were several International Association of Business Communicators and Canadian Public Relations Society luncheon training programs on a variety of communications and public relations topics that were attended by a good number of CNS staff.

Enhance communications through use of technologies
Core Business Function supported: Communications Planning, Creative Services, Media Services, Publication Services
Evolving technologies such as Internet, intranet, streaming media, digital imaging, Macromedia Flash and print-on-demand are powerful tools for information delivery. We encourage and assist our clients in the use of these technologies. CNS needs to be a model in the effective use of technology. Therefore we have determined which of our current services will experience increased demand, and how our resources can best be optimized for government's information delivery. We keep abreast of technological advances in order to optimize our plans for equipment and software acquisitions.

2. Creative Services

Establish focal point for CNS client service
Core Business Function supported: Communications Planning, Creative Services, Media Services, Publication Services
CNS now has a Client Services Coordinator who works as an advocate for both clients and CNS to ensure an organized and timely approach to provision of creative services. The coordinator monitors client projects from start to finish and is actively involved in building good relationships between CNS and its clients.

Foster relationships that lead to efficiencies and economies through cooperative projects
Core Business Function supported: Communications Planning, Creative Services, Media Services, Publication Services
The Client Services Coordinator has become the primary point of contact for many clients and in that capacity assists departments in determining which communications tools will best serve their needs. The coordinator has also facilitated work groups within CNS which extend beyond traditional organizational boundaries in order to maximize benefits to clients.

Research/implement technological changes
Core Business Function supported: Communications Planning, Creative Services, Media Services, Publication Services
The Creative Services division regularly researches evolving technology to ensure that we can offer top quality and technologically up-to-date products to our clients. For example, during 2003-04 Creative Services has helped develop a video presentation for Transportation and Public Works that employs advanced character animation as a means of conveying to children the importance of snow plow safety.

3. Media Services:

Improve service through technology and private sector contracts
Core Business Function supported: Communications Planning, Media Services
CNS continues to work with media outlets to improve its service delivery to those outlets province-wide. For example, print and radio advertising are now provided electronically to all media, which allows for better coordination on government programs or initiatives that require both paid advertising and earned media (news releases, public service announcements).

Accelerate provincial delivery of news releases and advertising
Core Business Function supported: Communications planning, Media Services, Creative Services, Publication Services
The news release distribution system has been upgraded, enabling CNS to provide notes to editors and news releases to all provincial media outlets swiftly and efficiently. Where and when feasible, releases can even be provided in advance of an announcement or event in order to meet publication dates that coincide with those announcements or events.

Build on service to government through media monitoring
Core Business Function supported: Communications planning
An electronic clipping service has provided client departments with useful and up to date information on public opinion, events and issues that relate to their respective mandates. However, this service is a somewhat complex matter that will require further study, review and discussion during 2004-05.

Play key role in professional development for CNS staff
Core Business Function supported: Communications planning, Media Services, Creative Services, Publications Services
A skills analysis has been completed and training to further develop those skills is provided to all agency personnel on an ongoing basis.

Professional development sessions organized by the Media Services division included in-house media training and refresher training sessions for CNS staff deployed in government departments.

4. Publication Services:

Continue rationalization of production printing assets
Core Business Function supported: Media Services, Creative Services, Publications Services
The rationalization process is now complete and will remain so until such time as technological or government printing requirements change. Full networked, digital print and scanning capability are now in place in various Queens Printer locations.

Review government print buying policies
Core Business Function supported: Creative Services, Publications Services
This review, conducted jointly with Procurement, has been completed. It was decided to maintain current tendering practices, pending further and ongoing review of printing requirements. The review took into account vendor qualifications and their geographical locations that best serve government.

Complete review of department documents with view to expand co-publishing policy
Core Business Function supported: Creative Services, Publications Services
Not done. Would require major shift in CNS publishing operation that was not expected to be cost effective.

Financial Results

Communications Nova Scotia - Budget Expenditures by Core Business 2003–04		
Core Business	Authorized Budget	Actual Expenditures
	$ Thousands	$ Thousands
Communications Planning/Administration Executive Director's Office	275.1	273.1
Media Services Administration, Communications Support, Advertising	2,264.1	2,099.7
Creative Services Administration, Graphics/Editorial, Photo/Video/Multimedia	2,284.2	2,275.0
Publication Services Queens Printer, Print Production	5,860.2	6,129.3
Communications Services	3,209.5	3,393.7
Total - Gross Current	13,893.1	14,170.8
Total - Program Expenses net of Recoveries	**3,602.0**	**3,297.7**
Salaries and Benefits	5,817.6	5,960.0
Funded Staff (FTE's)	93.2	94.1

Authority: $3,600,000 Actual: $3,297,700 Variance: $304,300

In 2003–2004, Communications Nova Scotia had an approved budget allocation of $3,602,000. Actual net 2003–2004 expenditures totaled $3,297,700 (92 % spent). Savings were realized through CNS divisional expenditure control related to professional services and general operating accounts (IT hardware purchases, equipment leases and repairs, etc.).

Performance Measures

Measure: Improved interaction between communication staff and business delivery entities within departments and agency.

This measure is relevant to the Creative Services core business function of Communications Nova Scotia. The desired outcome is "A strong awareness of the communications network available to government in all aspects of information support."

What does the measure tell us?
Creative Services, because of its expertise in the many disciplines involved in information distribution, is well placed to advise government agencies on the best approaches for distributing their information to the public. This measure is about ensuring that government agencies are better aware of the expertise available to them from Creative Services by providing better information to them about us.

Where are we now?
In the fall of 2003 a new position, Client Services Coordinator, was created and staffed. The Coordinator has made presentations to government agencies about the services available through Creative Services. The Coordinator has also been involved in bringing together clients and informal work teams to evaluate client needs and develop better plans for delivering information to the public. In addition, the Coordinator has collaborated with the Public Service Commission so that information about Communications Nova Scotia has been incorporated into the orientation sessions for Leadership Development streams.

Where do we want to go/be in the future?
We plan to organize our internal staff so that they can work in flexible teams that will adapt to individual projects and initiatives thereby providing excellent service to our client agencies and, ultimately, the people of Nova Scotia. The intent is to assess the communications needs of individual projects, and create a customized project team, by combining individual experts in order to meet the unique needs of each project.

Measure: Improvement in expense to recovery ratio in the production of government printing assets
Achieve 1::0.85
Budget target for 04–05 – 1::0.88.

This measure relates to publication services core function of delivering quality government publications at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.

What does the measure tell us?
This measure tells us how efficiently we are using our in-house printing assets. The higher the recovery ratio, the more we are doing for less. This measure is an indication that efficiencies in our in house printing are continuing to improve.

Where are we now?
Queen's Printer now has three fully networked digital printing and scanning locations in Halifax. Two machines have been removed from the department of Justice and the department of Environment and Labour at Terminal Road and the central satellite print/scan centre is now serving the total needs of both departments.

Where do we want to go/be in the future?
We are now at a technological and service level equal to any available in the marketplace today for government's in-house printing. We now have to continue to monitor clients' needs (e.g. production scanning to digital files) and technology developments and be prepared to adjust where and when it is necessary.

Measure: The number of publications being considered for co-publication.

What does the measure tell us?
That there are a significant number of government publications that could be considered for co-publication.

Where are we now?
Progress is being made and we are succeeding in our efforts and desire to help support local publishers, but further promotion of co-publishing is needed.

Where do we want to go/be in the future?
As CNS Publishing is in contact with all departments from time to time about their publication needs, all requests for publishing services will be monitored for co-publishing opportunities.

Measure: Accurate Contact List and Best Practices Report

What does the measure tell us?
That we have an accurate and complete listing of communications staff available for use in emergency situations.

Where are we now?
Accomplished. In December 2003, 68 eight employees participated in a workshop which addressed the role of CNS during emergencies. The Emergency Communicators' Network met in March, 2004, specifically to share and discuss best practices that should be followed during emergencies.

Where do we want to go/be in the future?
We will continue to organize meetings with emergency communicators in private and public sectors.